Effects of Personnel Risk Management Strategies on Road Construction Project Delivery in Kenya

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Abstract

The most predominant mode of transport in Kenya is road transport with over 90% of all freight and passenger traffic transported by road. It is, for this reason, the Government, through the State Department of Infrastructure, has embarked on major road investments. In the financial year 2021-2022, Kenya National Treasury allocated KSh.200 billion for the construction of over 6,000 kilometers of new roads to expand the country's accessibility. The reason for construction of roads is to reduce traffic jam, which in Nairobi is estimated to cause $1 billion a year in lost productivity. Road construction projects in Kenya are complex and challenging sometimes resulting to delay in completion time, litigation, and cost overruns. This is partly contributed to the personnel risk management performance in the road construction sector which has traditionally been instinctive or based on unwritten rules where most of the time risks have either been ignored or handled arbitrarily. However, some road projects (167.9 kilometers valued at Ksh. 690.4 billion) have had major challenges due to execution by ill-equipped contractors resulting in compromised quality of work executed, projects running behind schedule as well as having high-cost overruns. The reason for this being attributed to the lack of enforcement of effective personnel risk management strategies. This study sought to assess the influence of personnel risk management strategies on delivery of road construction projects in Kenya, with the main focus on Nairobi Expressway, Kenol-marua and Isebani-Ahero road projects. The aspect of the personnel risk management strategies that were examined were risk avoidance and risk mitigation. This study used an explanatory research design, that tries to understand a problem that has not been conclusively researched. This study collected both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from 45 respondents in the management level using questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed by calculating the response rate with descriptive statistics such as means, median, standard deviation, and percentages using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The analyzed data was presented by the use of bar charts, graphs, and frequency tables. The qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis where common themes were placed together and then subjected to descriptive statistics. The study indicated that road construction companies investigated possibly implemented some of the strategies to protect their employees from injuries and avoid risk or uncertainties associated with personnel risks. In the road construction project investigated, they employed competent workers, supervised efficiently, trained workers, rewarded employees, ensured communication is effective from administration to all the workforce, and promoted highly productive employees. These measures towards personnel risk management are likely to contribute to timely project deliveries. The study concluded that personnel risk management strategy significantly influences project deliveries of road construction project. Protecting employees from harm while executing their duties and responsibility is vital because absence of one person may cause delay in project deliveries, faults in quality, and other threats to a company operation, calling for avoidance of the associated risks at all cost. The study recommended that Road construction company's management should devise and implement personnel risk management strategies. They should

ensure safety of employees is guaranteed and motivates them to maintain competent workers. Furthermore, implementation of the strategies to protect their employees from injuries and avoidance of risk or uncertainties associated with personnel risks should be highly considered.
Keywords: Road project construction, personnel risk management, project delivery